DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 298 006 SO 018 003

AUTHOR	Heaton, Moss, Ed.
TITLE	Arthur Smith, Local Baptist Pastor.
PUB DATE	85
NOTE	60p.; For related documents, see SO 018 000-007.
AVAILABLE FROM	Loblolly, Inc., Box 189, Garry, TX (Subscription $6.00 a year; single copies, $3.00).
PUB TYPE	Historical Materials (060) -- Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Materials (For Learner) (051)
JOURNAL CIT	Loblolly Magazine; v9 n2 Sum 1985
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Childrens Games; Ethnography; *Folk Culture; Local History; Monologs; Narration; Personal Narratives; *Rural Areas; Rural Population; Secondary Education; *Story Telling
IDENTIFIERS	*Texas (East)

ABSTRACT

Written and published by the students at Gary High School this volume has three articles dealing with East Texas life. The first "Arthur Smith" (David Hancock and others) is an account of growing up in Marian County, Texas is described by the local Baptist minister. The pastor begins with the year of his birth and gives detailed information about such things as gathering wild fruit, vegetables, and tanning squirrel hides for shoe-string leather. The second article, "Outhouses," (Allen Gilpatrick and others) describes what life was like without indoor bathrooms. The third article, "Marbles," (Anthony Templeton and others) describes the conventions of playing marble games in the United States. (BZ)

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Loblolly

Summer 1985

$3.00

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Volume IX No. 2 Summer 1985

Contents

2 Arthur Smith- by David Hancock, Alan Couey, and Karen Whiteside.

38 Outhouses- by Allen Gilpatrick, Anthony Templeton, Karen Whiteside, Ronnette Griffith, Kelly Jones, Michaela Whitehead, Randy Liedtke, Angie Rousey, Melissa Tinkle, Alan Couey, and Michael Coulter.

49 Marbles- Anthony Templeton, Karen Whiteside, and Michaela Whitehead.

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Loblolly magazine is published by Loblolly, Inc., students at Gary High School, Box 189, Gary, Texas 75643. Circulation is by subscription and newstand. Subscriptions are $6.00 a year, single copies, $3.00. Some back issues are available. Copyright 1985 by the Loblolly, Inc.

Front cover: The picture of assorted farm and home tools was taken by Randy Liedtke.

Arthur Smith

Arthur Smith is a retired pastor of Corinth Baptist church which is between Gary and Timpson. In addition to being a christian friend, he seems to be endowed with endless talents. He grew up in a self-sufficient age and learned a wide range of skills. He has shared many of these talents with us. He has also informed us on the difference of his child hood days compared to his life now.

Things were a lot different in those days than they are now and that was a good many years ago. I was born in 1912 near Jacksonville, Texas. And my dad was just a renter farmer and he moved quite a bit trying to find a better piece of land to work. We lived in a number of different places in East Texas. When I was about thirteen years old we landed down in Tatum in the north east end of Rusk County. And we lived on an old place out there five miles from Tatum on Mrs. Lizzy Holclaus' place. She was the postmaster there at that time in Tatum and was for some forty years. The place we lived on was her dads old place, the Billy Watts place. The old house we lived in was real old. Some said it was even built with slave labor and that I do not know. But I know it was real

old. We had to work hard for a living in those days. We raised everything we could on the farm to put up to eat. We put up enough in the spring and summer time when the crops were good to last us through the winter and the dull seasons. And everybody had to work.

When I was a small boy I lived in Marian County, north of Lake of the Pines. When I was just 10 or 11 years old, papa was showing me how to plow and the things we plowed with then were not like we use today, like farmers use. Most all of our plows were one horse plows except for the raking plows. We hooked two mules to them. We had what was called a Georgia stock. It just had a single foot piece on it, and you could put different plows on there, a sweep, or a

Arthur Smith and Alan Couey of the Loblolly staff.

shovel or such for whatever you were trying to do. And when I was only 10 years old papa was teaching me how to run one of those things. Maybe to plow up the cotton after he noticed the cotton had got pretty big. It wasn't too particular work and 'course it was hard on me, being as small as I was. I was just a skinny like kid in those days. He taught me that everybody in the family had to assure a certain amount of responsibility to the family. To help out all they could. That doesn't mean that Dad was mean, or a slave driver or anything like that, he just tried to teach all of us responsibility to one another. And as I look back on it now, I can see that this is good for anyone. Any child needs to be taught responsibility, whether it's, a boy or girl, and needs to learn how to do things. Even if they're rich folks' children, I still think they need to learn how to work and how to do things with their hands. They need to learn crafts and skills because it might be necessary some day for them to do such.

At a very early age Mama taught me how to do things around the house. I learned how to wash dishes when I was very young. Of course that was just in the old dish pan. We didn't have modern plumbing in the house in those days. I'd help her put out the weekly wash; it was usually an all day affair. We'd draw the water or carry it from the spring. I put water in the old wash pot, hustled wood, built a fire around it and heated the water. Then we'd wet the clothes, put them in that wash pot and a lot of soap too.

The soap we used in those days was not the new improved kind you get out of a box today. We usually got the old P&G bar soap. A little later on they came up with some powdered soap. Gold Dust and Oxydol were the first two brands I remember anything about. They're still on the market today, I guess. We'd take that bar of soap and shave it up in the wash pot in thin shavings so it would melt quickly. In a 20 gallon wash pot, we'd cut up a whole bar of soap. That was pretty rough on us financially because that soap cost ya about 6 bars for a quarter in those days.

We put the soap and the clothes in the pot. We had a stick 'bout like a broom handle, sometimes it was a broom handle, for a punching stick to stir the clothes around. We'd build a fire hot enough that the water would boil. The boiling, punching, and soap in there would loosen that dirt up and get it out. Well, a lot of times we'd rub them on the rub-board. The wash tub would have a bench with two or three wash tubs. Under the shade of a tree, we'd wash clothes. I have blistered my knuckles a number of times, scrubbing clothes on a rubboard, helping mama when I was just a boy.

I didn't waste all my time just idling around like Huckleberry Finn did. I played a lot, don't misunderstand me, like most kids I didn't just play all the time. There was no television to watch. There was no radio to listen to. There was no record player to crank up. We didn't have anything like that. I helped a lot around the place with chores. In canning, at an early age, I learned how to peel apples, tomatoes, peaches or whatever we were canning. I helped get those things ready to put in jars. I enjoyed this, still do. So that was the way things went with poor country people.

Now let's remember that not everybody lived like that. There were more people who were fluid in those days and they did not have to manage or work as hard as we did. But there were a lot of people, the general run of people in East Texas, that lived off or the farm and land. So life was quieter and slower paced in those days. There was not as much to get excited about as there is today. People had more time to enjoy life than we do in this world today. I think it was much better in a lot of ways. As I recall, I don't remember of many people dying of heart attacks or cracking up with nervous break downs. In those days there was not as much nervous tension as there is this day. Most people lived a slower, quieter, easier life even though they worked harder. I've learned by experience that hard work won't kill anybody (course I've had my share of it) but worry, strain, and stress will.

Back in those days we lived off the land a lot. We have a lot of natural resources in East Texas. God has blessed this country richly with a lot of natural resources in the way of food stubs. My dad grew up in an age where people had to live off the land. He was born in 1873. My mother was born in 1871. Of course they came from an era when there was not an automobile or any kind of electrical appliance or anything like that. They did everything the old fashion way. Dad was a good hunter and fisherman and he learned how to live off the land back in his day. He taught me a lot of that. At an early age he taught me how to shoot a gun, how to kill squirrel, and rabbits. And when I was no more than 12 years old, dad had an old double barrel shotgun. I'd take that thing and go on down Johnson creek and kill a mess of squirrels by myself. Today most people would be afraid to let a twelve year old handle a shotgun. They'd be afraid he'd get lost or hurt someone else. But I had been taught a lot about those as I grew up, caues Dad hunted a lot. He let me go with him and watch him, and help him.

We caught a lot of fish. A big cypress bayou was down at the back of our field about 3/4 of a mile from our house. Which is under Lake of the Pines at the present. Chossel Creek was full of fish, and we ate a lot of fish. They're not only good, they're good for you, they have a lot of food value in them. So life wasn't all just drudgery and hard work. A lot of times along towara the end of the week, papa would say "Boys lets just turn the horses and mules into the pasture, and dig us some worms and go fishing." Well of course the fun loving boy that I was didn't protest that a bit in the world. I was ready to go, you understand, just to have a good time. And we could have a good time just going down on the creek or river, and spending the afternoon fishing. We'd put out some back hook and catch a bunch of cat fish that night. The streams were clean in those days, so we went in swimming quite often.

We had a swimming hole in Johnson Creek down below the house. Lots or days in the summer time,

we'd take about an hour and 1/2 or two hours off at noon. Let the mules and horses rest and we'd get some rest. Papa was a good swimmer. He loved the water. We'd go down there and play in that cold spring fed creek for an hour or two in the middle of the day. Well that's good recreation in anybody's language. Especially for a growin kid. I learned how to swim when I was 6 or 7 years old. I enjoyed spending a lot of time in the creek, just us boys and men playing. Actually we were skinny dipping; wasn't anybody down there to watch us. We were down in the thicket. We had a lot of fun.

But getting back to the things, the main stream of life back in those days. Schools were much different then from what they are now. When we lived over there in Marion County, my sister (who was 6 ½ years old) and I attended a little county school that was about 3 miles from our house. And we walked to school, the school bus had not been invented in those days or heard of. We were about at the furthest point from the school in that community of anybody who went to that school. We'd start down the road. And of course, nearly every house we'd pass, there'd be one or two other kids come out. Before we got to school, there would be nearly 25 or 30 or maybe 40 in one gang going down that one road to school every morning. It was a little old school called Mims Chapel. But it had a country name that every one called it, and that was Bug Scuffle. There was a lot of scuffling going on there, too. There were some people around there that thought the only way to get along was to do it by force. They'd try to force everybody to do what they wanted done. I've told people, the law of survival was something there. You either had to know how to run or how to fight to survive. Sometimes you did a little of both. There were a lot of things happened as I look back on it now days. Humorous things as I see it now, But it was not humorous then. We carried our lunch. There was no such thing as a school cafeteria in those days; nor a lunch counter, snack bar, or candy machine. Those

things had not been invented. We carried our lunch in a paper sack or a half gallon syrup bucket. It you got hungry at recess, and wanted to eat a bite, you didn't eat too much because you couldn't carry too much in that small bucket. You had to make it last for the day. There was nowhere to go get anything if you ran out. I remember one day in particular, there was an old church building about 50 yards from the school house. This was a sand hill that those buildings sat on. Just an oval sand hill, not a steep hill, but it was real sandy.
In dry weather, that sand was just doodle bug dust. A lot of times, some of us kids would go down there and sit on the steps in front of the church. It was kind of wide, about 8 ft. wide. We'd sit there and eat our lunch. I was sitting there on the step one day and had my lunch can open. The kind of lunch we carried in those days wasn't a ham sandwich. I'll tell you that. Mother would make some good family style biscuits. If we'd killed any hogs, if it was late enough in the year for that, I'd have a patty or two of home made sausage in there. And maybe some fig preserves or pear preserves. Or something in a biscuit, and things like that, or a baked potato. That's the kind of lunch we carried. Well that's good wholesome food. People use to call that soul food, some still do. The reason they called it that 'cause it would keep soul and body together. Well, I was sitting there eating my lunch. And there was a boy who didn't like me very well. It was mutual; I didn't like him very well either. We had tangled several times. He came along and rammed his foot in the sand. All the sand that was on the top of his foot, he pitched in my lap. I had this bucket with my lunch in it and it filled full of dry sand. Well that kind of thing will make you lose your disposition right quick. There was no more food around. All I could do was just shake the sand off and go ahead and eat it. I got plenty or sand in my craw that day. It didn't make me sick or kill me, but I sure got out of humor about it. When I got through eating my lunch, I had a reckon-

ing with that character. We weren't too good of friends after that. But anyhow, in school those days, part of the time they had two teachers. They taught the basic 3 R's there. Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic. And that R could also stand for roughin it up, I guess. I remember several times when the teacher would send me and another boy down to the edge of the woods. The school house was surrounded by woods, almost up to the edge of the school house. She would send us out there to get some good cane switches. They had discipline in schools those days. The kids respected the teachers. They minded the teachers. They did what the teacher told them to do. Just whatever the case was. One day, she sent me and another boy after some switches. And we got some really big ones. When we got back I got the surprise of my life. Little did I know, that I was to be the recipient of one of those switches. I had no idea, I wouldn't have gotten nearly such large switches. But anyhow, you got your hide tanned once in a while. And 'course you lived over that too. And I suppose it helps make a better person out of you. But anyway, that was some of my earlier childhood. We lived there when I was about 12 years old. And then, as I said, I started school at Tatum. I went there my last 5 years of public school. Of course, I had grown up some then. I had gotten to the point that I didn't enjoy fighting, as much as some people did, to say the least of it. I tried to be more peaceable. Of course you had to defend yourself whether you wanted to or not; or you'd get your skull skinned, even at Tatum school. That was just 1926 when I started to school there. It was just a small school. They must have had about 7 or 8 teachers around there. But you'd have (even there) 2 or 3 classes in one room. We had just large rooms. And I know, today, it's hard for school children to think like that. But we would, 30 or 40 children in this one room.

I remember very well when I was in the seventh grade, the eighth grade was in there, too. And when I got

promoted to the eighth grade I remember a new group of seventh graders came in that same room with the eighth grade. So I was in that room for two years. The teachers would move from room to room. It was a lot easier and quieter to do that then to move 30 or 40 kids. There was a lot of good experience. Athletics weren't what they are today. 'Course, I suppose there was some places that played football back then, but we didn't. We had never learned about football back then, no we didn't. We had never learned about football at Tatum but we did play basketball on a gravel court. There was a place leveled on the schoolyard with iron ore or gravel on it. We'd rake it and roll it down. If it was dry, we'd wet it down so it wouldn't be dusty. And that's the kind of a court we played basketball on. You could fall down real hard on it and skin both your knees and both elbows in one fall. It'd just tear you up on that gravel. It was enough. Now I never did really play on the main team. I just messed around on the sideline a little bit. But we had some good basketball players at Tatum. We won a number of games. We also played baseball, not competitively, but cow pasture type games. Tatum had about the roughest baseball team in the country. They played Beckville and Taiko, a place across the river near Marshall and other places like that. We really had some times back then. I tried to play baseball a little bit, but I never was too good at it. But anyhow, we had an interesting time. I remember we had what was known as Interscholastic meets. It was a competition of the schools in the county. I remember one year, the teacher persuaded another boy in my class and me to enter in the math contest. We did and we won, believe it or not. That was a high day, I tell you for sure it was. Another time they entered me in declamation. The teacher thought I could talk, I guess I always talked. Sometimes Mama thought I talked too much. So she entered me in declamation that year. I studied a bunch. I did a piece of prose about 5 minutes long about a court trial. That's something to rem-

ember and say in some sensible order. That took some doing to do it, but I did it. I came out pretty good, I guess. I won second place in declamation. Of course, the thing about it was, there were only two in the contest. So it was pretty easy to win second place. But I enjoyed doing those things. I thought I was pretty good in track. We were having races one day, some sprints. There was an old boy from Laneville I hadn't never seen or heard of before. I was at the head of the pack but he passed me like I was sitting still. He won 1st place in every event he was in. I think he was a new comer. Nobody had ever heard of him before, but he was fast. So that was about the end of my track career right there. I realized I wasn't as fast as I thought I was. But anyhow, those were some of the interesting highlights of my school days. I wasn't anything like a wizard in school I was just, guess what you would think of as, a kind of medium scholar student. Anyway that's how it was in those years. I did a lot of studying. In fact in the ministry, I've been a student all along through the years studied alot of different things.

Another thing that might be a little different, in my growing up days to what it is now days, is the way that children were reared. There was a more settled home life in those days. Very few women worked outside the home. A good many women were school teachers and some clerking in stores. There were not nearly as many mothers working outside the home. They stayed at home and did the house work; kept the home together. The women reared the children, whilt the father was out trying to make a living. Most homes had stern discipline. I know ours did, my dad was a stern disciplinarian. He demanded and expected respect from all of us children. There were five of us children. I was the youngest. He had not let up because I was the youngest in the family. He didn't show a lot of favortism to me. He expected me to be just as obedient and respectful as the others had been. And as I look back on it now, having reared a

family, I can be thankful for the discipline he exercised over us children. We didn't have the laws then that was so crazy. When a person spanks a child, somebody turns them in, and have them prosecuted for child abuse. We didn't have anything like that in those days. A kid could get his pants torn real good and the neighbors didn't know about it. Unless he screamed real loud or something. But anyhow, even though Dad was real stern and strict, he loved us children. I can see now, being a father myself, that is why he did this, because he loved us. If a parent loves their children they will discipline them, and make them mind and be respectful. He tried to teach us to be honest and truthful. I can't say we did everything he always wanted us to do, because everybody has the old sinful rebellious human nature within them. All children are going to try to rebel at one time or another against their parents. We have something built into us that we just don't want anybody telling us what to do or what not to do. That's just a thing that's common in all people. Mother sometimes got after me, but she was not as rough on me as Papa was. If she got mad at me she'd just slap me upside the head real hard a time or two. Of course that hurt, too. Hurt my feelings more than anything else. But we did have discipline in the home. Anytime Papa told me to do something, or not to do it, I knew I had to do it, or refrain from doing it, (what ever the occasion was) or else he'd tan my hide. When he told me something he meant it. He usually didn't tell me a half dozen times. He usually told me the second time or maybe the third time to be sure I heard him and understood him. But if I didn't act then it was just too bad. One of his favorite discipline tools was an old homemade razor strap. Papa and my older brothers used a strait razor to shave with. In the warm weather that old razor strap was hanging out on the back porch. Papa had a shelf out there with a wash pan and a mirror hanging on the wall. That's where they shaved. If I got out of line, papa would grab that old razor strap. That thing was not one of these light weight store bought ones. It was made out of

an old buggytug. It was about two inches or two and ½ inches wide. It was pretty thick. And had a handle hewed out on one end of it, and a hole drilled in the other end to hang it on a nail.

That dude was about 28-30 inches long, and heavy. When he hit the seat of my pants with that, it got all the dust out with just one or two licks, he layed it on me sometimes. Not nearly as much as he should have because I got away with a lot of things he didn't know about. But anyhow, he believed in discipline in the home. I'm thankful today that he did. If he had been a little more strict with me maybe I'd came out a little better later in life. Most of the people I know that lived around us were very similar. Most parents in those days taught their children respect and obedience.

Arthur Smith.

Well back in my younger days, back when I was just seven or eight years old, we lived over near DeBerry, Texas in Panola County. My dad, Mother and older brothers were members of a Baptist church in DeBerry. I was just young at the time. I started school at DeBerry school. One summer while we lived there, some people built a brush arbor not to far from where we lived. It was a fairly common thing back in those days. Years before, they started playing out, but they still had a few of them. I remember one evening late, Papa hooked the team to the wagon. That was the only way we had to travel. Very few people had a car in those days. We all got in the wagon and went down to this brush arbor and sat in the meeting that night. You didn't go to sleep at church at that kind of service very well because the seats were just a rough 2X12 that they got at the saw mill. They sawed some blocks of a log about the height of a chair and sat about three or four in a row and lay 2X12 on 'em. And that was a seat. They had a bunch of seats like that. Nothing to lean back against. You couldn't get comfortable sitting on that, so we usually stayed awake during service. It wasn't like it is today, these upholstered pews. Slide down one and take a good nap. But they didn't do that in that kind of service. Back in those days, nearly every summer, somebody would put up a brush arbor and they'd hold a meeting under it. Well, there was a little advantage to that because air condition hadn't been invented in those days. Electricity had not even come down to our end of the road. It made it a little cooler. People would sit out in that open air in that brush-arbor. They'd just set up some poles in the ground, that were forked at the top. Layed some poles in that, then cut a bunch of green limbs with green leaves on them and layed just a solid layer on top of that. That's what the brush arbor was. If they made it in daytime that gave them a shade. Then at night, air passing through there; everybody could get part of the breeze. It also gave people a relaxed atmosphere. They could get people to come to that when they wouldn't come to church at the church house. There were several different motives behind having the brush-arbor. In a lot of cases there was a lot of good done with them,

a lot of good preachings, a lot of good singing. And some shouting. And maybe a lot of people found the Lord at a brush-arbor. Those were some of the good old days that we hear about and read about.

Another thing that is quite interesting that happened back in my younger days, is how boys and girls courted in that day. The rules and regulations were quite a bit different from what they are now. Parents were a lot more strict with their children then and especially over their girls. Girls did not have anything like the liberty and freedom for courting and dating that they do now days. They didn't go out as often, go as far, or stay as long as they do now. I know that when my wife and I were courting in the early 30's, we had our first date on May Day in 1932. That was kind of a high day in our lives. She was of course, one of those brilliant young ladies. She thought she was smart because she played that hard to get stuff. I had to try the fourth time before I got a date with her. The first time, she just ignored me; the second time, she acted a little more congenial; the third time, she let me talk to her a little bit more; and then the fourth try, I got a date with her. We started going together. She was the youngest of ten children. She had three single sisters and a single brother at home while we were dating. Her mother and dad were real strict about dating, courting rules and regulations. Many times when I'd go see her, we'd spend time together until eight or nine o'clock. You didn't stay out with a girl until twelve o'clock. You did, you would get somebody after you with a shotgun. But we'd spend the time there at her home. Her daddy was a very congenial person. And he liked young people, but he just had some rules and regulations for his daughters. We played a lot of dominoes, 42, and checkers in those days. We popped a lot of corn, and ate it. He raised a lot of peanuts, nearly always have some peanuts around the place. We'd roast a pan full of those. We'd set around there and eat roasted peanuts and popcorn and play dominoes or 42, or something like that with the whole bunch.

Maybe some of the other girls' beaus would be there too. There would be three or four of us boys there, at the same time courtin these three or four girls. Well, sometimes we'd all get in that model-T I drove (old model-T ford 26 model, but it would run). Those things were pretty small. I don't know how we did it, of course us kids were thin in those days. But we'd load up six or eight of us in that model-T and go somewhere. I can't remember but very, very few times just very few that we ever went anywhere by ourselves while we were courtin. There was always another couple or two along. You just didn't get off by yourself somewhere on a shady lane and park. You just didn't do that. One interesting thing happened one night. There were six of us in this thing and had been somewhere to a party. Back in those days we had a lot of just country play parties we called it. We'd play all kinds of games. There'd be a whole gang of us. There might be thirty or forty of us, and we'd play all kinds of nice little games. It gave us a chance to get together; get out and stir around. Then about that time, the country dance was inaugurated and set up. That was before they had night clubs and dance halls all over the country. Anyway, young people from far and wide would gather up there. We'd have somebody that could make some noise with some instruments. Incidentally, I started playing the guitar when I was about 13 years old. Another boy, I ran around with, played the mandolin. And another one played the fiddle. He could make some pretty good noise. We played at those country dances. Of course I didn't play all the time because I liked to dance too, believe it or not. I wore out a good many shoe soles dancing at those country dances when I was a young fella. I don't know whether that was the best way to live or not, but I guess there were things worse than that that a fella could do. But we had a lot of fun at those things, they usually went pretty well. Sometimes somebody would bring some home made boot leg (liquor). This was all dry country in those days. There was no legal liquor in East

Texas, or anywhere around in this country, in those days, where you could buy it legally. There was always somebody making this stuff somewhere down on the branch. And somebody would get some of this and bring it to the dance and we'd get pretty tipsy and create some trouble and things like that. But we didn't have much of that in those days. It was usually the exception rather than the rule.

We did a lot of walking in those days. I remember a lot of times when I'd go see my wife, my girl friend before we married, there'd be three, four, five, or six couples of us gang up and just walk down the road. Just a country road. We'd walk down this road and down that road and around. We might walk 4 or 5 miles on a Sunday afternoon, just strolling around. Talking, having fun, and being together. And now days young people can't do anything unless they have a fancy sports car to jump in and take off down the road, go to town or somewhere, down to the Dairy Queen, or snack bar, or movie or something like that where they hang out. But it was much different when we were young people. Another thing, we'd go over to my girlfriend's home. They had what they call a parlor room. It wasn't really a parlor cause they were fancy things; a parlor was. It was kinda a sitting, reading room, music room. This was a room that was away from the main living room. Where the fireplace was and where the old people stayed. They had a bed in every room in those days, big families did. They had to in order to make out. Well, a lot of times my wife's mother and dad would go to bed, there'd be two or three of us couples in this next room. We didn't disturb them with our talk, we didn't want them to hear what we were saying in the first place. We talked real low and whispered. Well, along about 9:00 P.M. that was just about as long as they'd let us stay. Mrs. Armstrong would say "Girls it's bedtime". That's all she would say. Most of the time, we were getting up before she got all that out of her mouth. We didn't want to jeopardize the future. We wanted to come back. If we didn't move pretty quickly, Mr.

Armstrong would clear his throat, "Hum Hum....Girls it's bed time!" And when he spoke we knew to take action. We seldom let him speak the second time, cause if we did there was a lot more harshness in his tone. We got up and got out of there and were on our way home by 9:00. Very few times did we stay past 9:00. Now days its hard for people to think in that way . Because most young people wouldn't, think about coming in and settling down before midnight out on a date; eleven o'clock anyhow. But that's the way it was then.

We went to picture shows some, we had picture shows in those days believe it or not. I can remember the very first sound movie in East Texas. They had it in Marshall, and that was before I met my wife. Back when I was a teenager and lived over in Tatum, we went to picture shows. They had a sound track. The sound and the picture were not coordinated. The words didn't come out at the time the fella would work his mouth. It was something else. After my wife and I started going together, we went to picture shows every now and then. You could go up to Henderson. They had two or three picture shows operating at that time, that was our nearest place to go. You could take a quarter and get a ticket which was 15¢ for the picture show, and and then get a bag of popped corn and a soda water, all with a quarter. So a guy could take his girl out and take 50¢ and have a ball.

Very interesting too, there was a fella who married my wifes sister. This was back before they married, we'd all four, go to the picture show together. I'd walk up to the ticket window, and start fumbling in my pockets and I'd say, "Let me buy the tickets, and he'd say "Let me buy the tickets", he'd fumble around and before he could get through fumbling, I'd done had the tickets bought. And he'd out fumble me at the ticket line. I got wise to that. I realized that I had been taken. He was kinda a tightwad. So I made up my mind the next time we went to the show I was gonna out fumble him. So we went one night and he started his deal, "Let me buy the tickets, let me buy em." I just stepped back and said, "All-right get

em." That took the grin off his face. But anyhow in those days. Picture shows were a lot cleaner than they are now. There was no such thing as an x-rated picture show in those days. They just never made anything like that. We saw a lot of westerns. The old time boys; Hoot Gibson, Tom Mix, and all those and then Gene Autry and Tex Ritter. I've seen him on the screen a lot of times. There'd usually be features. They'd have the main picture, then have a segment of a serial that they would run from time to time. Just a chapter each time, that would make you come back, just leave you cliff hanging when it stopped. Then they'd always have a comedy. The Three Stooges or Laural and Hardy or somebody like that. So you really got your moneys worth. For your 15¢ I'll guarantee ya. We hardly ever went except on the weekends, maybe Friday night or Saturday night. And we'd go just late in the evening round about four, five, six o'clock see the whole thing, and sometimes, sit through it twice if we had time. They had a good fan in there to cool that theatre. They'd have a big sign out front that said, "Cooled by Washed Air." It wasn't a thing in the world except a water cooled fan, like you have a window fan. An evaporated water cooled fan, only it was a big one to cool the theatre. And it was comfortable in there, that cool damp air blew through that thing. And we'd sit in there and watch that movie and chomp on that popped corn.

Well now going back on your movies to my earlier times when I was a teenager, lived down in Tatum. A friend of mine his dad put in a theatre there and it was an antique job. You turned the projecter with a crank. Didn't even use electricity to run it. And I helped him run it. The film was sorry, it would break pretty often. We were all time patching film, with some tape that they had to patch it with. And he'd turn a while and I'd turn a while, cause that would get your arm tired. We could turn it as fast would get your arm tired. We could turn it as fast as we wanted and make the picture go crazy. But that was back in the early days of movies. I'm sure that a lot of places had electric ones but this was a hand powered one. Only one I

ever knew of. When the film would run out and we'd have to change reels, we'd turn the lights on and the people would have an intermission. Then we'd get that film on and crank it up again. But that was some of the things that were really different back in those days.

Another thing that was quite different back in those days was church life. Church life was much more simpler then it is now days. Didn't have a lot of the modern conveniences, comforts, or luxuries, churches enjoy today. When I was a little over thirteen years old we moved to Tatum and started attending church at the Baptist Church. It was just a small church, and at that time they just had what we call, part time services, only twice a month. We had Sunday School every Sunday, but we only had preaching services, twice a month. I can remember those things that happened back in those days. There were two ladies that were leaders in the church, Mrs. Ema Pierce and her sister Mrs. Mary Sharon. Usually, one of them was Sunday School superintendent and the other one was the song director. I can remember them very well. They played an important role in my spirtual life back in those days in teaching Sunday School. I remember Mrs. Pierce was my Sunday School teacher for several years there. The way things worked; the Methodist church was right across the street from the Baptist church. And they had just half time services too, and they had it staggered. So the days we had preachin services. And the next day when we didn't have anything but Sunday School they had preaching. Well, a lot of us especially young people we would go down there and sit in there services after Sunday School and hear the preachin down there. I don't say that's the best arrangement because of their difference in religious views, but anyhow that's how the way things were at that time. Then after we had been going a while to the Tatum church they started loving full time services. They had a pastor there and preaching every Sunday. Then I quit going to the Methodist church.

In 1927 along in July, we usually had a Revival. They had Bro. Joe Smith, no relation of mine, who lived in Tenaha. He was either premature gray or real old I remember he was real white headed. But he was a good

preacher, as I remember. And it was during that meeting that summer, that I heard the Gospel to the extent that I was convicted of my sins, and turned to Christ and Accepted him as my personal Saviour. We didn't have a baptistry like a lot of churches in that day. And after that meeting there were about ½ dozen of us young people who had joined the church and had come for baptism. We were baptised in a pond about 2½ miles north of Tatum, up the railroad, called Heavlingstons pond it was just a two acre pond and the railroad dump was the dam. There was a lot of lilly pads, but there was a pretty nice clearing there, where the water was deep enough and clear enough for baptising. That was a high day in our life. I was fifteen at the time. I've been able to look back on those days through the years. I remember when I trusted the Lord, and was identified with his church. It's given me something to stablize me through the years. Church wasn't like it is now.

In this interview you will discover many of the ways young people entertained themselves and each other in a simpler age. Join us now and see that it doesn't take money to have fun. Arthur Smith surely had many good times as a boy, and at a bargain price.

I am going to talk about some homemade toys and things we did to amuse ourselves or to make our own games and fun back when I was a boy. I don't recall reading this in any recent issue of Loblolly. I thought this might be interesting to the readers and so I have several things in mind I want to talk about, some may seem old fashion, yet they are interesting things. Many of the young people today know nothing about them at all.

When I was a boy, poor people were not able to buy a lot of toys for the children, and many of them made most of the toys and play things. We just entertained ourselves at home a lot of times because we couldn't jump in the car and run to town or do a lot of things that the young people do now days. And so we had to make our own entertainment at home.

One of the things I always enjoyed, and many of the young people used in those days, was the pop-gun. This is made from a piece of elder bush. The elder bush is a type of growth that has a large soft pith in the middle of it and it is white corky substances. You bore that out and you have a hole left, it's about ½ inch in diameter, 3/8 or something like that. It all depends on the size of the bush that you get it from. And you want to pick a straight piece of it so your gun barrel will be straight. Make the barrel about ten inches long or just how ever long that the joint is.

Then you whittle out a ram rod. This is a stick that you leave a hand hold on the end, about four inches long. And you take a stick about as big as a broom handle. Sometimes we would use a piece of old broom handle if we could find one, and whittle it down real round and straight where it would fit in the barrel, a loose fit not wedged at all. You made it about a ½ inch shorter than the barrel.

Then you found you some green China berries, of course you had to do this at the right time of the year where the China berries were green and plenty on the trees. You select your berries that would just barely go in the barrel. You then push one down and it sticks in the end of the barrel. Then you push another one in and get it started, and hold the barrel in one hand and the ram rod in the other and just push it down real fast and it pops real loud. We kids used to make ours, each of us would have a pop-gun and we would have a war with these things. And boy you could burn a blister on a fellow two or three steps away with one of those green China berries. We really had a lot of fun with these. It's really nice to have, if you never have had one. You need to get someone to help you make one. Elder Bushes just grow all over East Texas and they're no trouble to find.

There is another thing that was a very unusual toy. It was a homemade wagon, and we made this from scratch. We'd just go out in the woods and find a good straight bodied sweet gum, that was just as round as we could find it and about ten inches or a foot thick. We'd take the old cross-cut saw and saw it down, and then we would saw off rings.

These were the wheels for the wagon. Dad would usually help me with this. And we would bore about an inch hole in the center of that wheel. If you didn't have a center well tnat thing was a real Leaping Lena when you would pull it.

Then we would take some good hard oak or hickory, a piece about two or three inches and about two feet long. We could whittle out a spindle on each end of it. Then we would take a hand saw and saw around them and make a shoulder on it and then whittle it out. We made that spindle just as round and smooth where it would fit in that hole as a loose fit. We would drill a small hole in the end of the axle, out past the wheel and made a real nice hard wood peg to fit the hole to hold the wheel on. Then we would grease that thing with axle grease (like the grease we put on wagons), and boy that thing would really roll. That's the way poor folks could get a wagon without having to go to town and buy one.

Then there was another thing that we made to play with. This was a steel ring that we rolled with a guide stick. We called it a roller and a guider. The steel ring was off a hub of a wagon, now this was a type wagon that had the wooden wheel and wooden hubs. The hubs had a rim around it that was about 7 or 8 inches in diameter. These were the larger ones up next to where the spokes were, and it's a little rim about a quarter of an inch thick and three quarters of an inch wide, just a steel ring. It was off of an old junk wagon. We would get these rings, and then we would take a stick that is just about 30 inches long. And we'd nail a cross piece on the end of it. Some of us liked to use a piece of tin can, mash it flat and bend it in a horse shoe shape, and nail it on the end of the stick. You put your ring down on the ground and started it rolling you could push it, just put that stick on it. And you could run everywhere pushing that ring. That was real fun. We'd run a lot of times behind one of those things.

Then another thing we made was a "Whirly Jig Noise Maker." You made this by taking a thin peice of board. It shouldn't be very thick, the thinner the better. Now - on days if you could get some real thing paneling, or ply board a 1/8 of an inch thick, that would be just right. You cut it out about 8 inches long and two inches wide at the wide end and about an inch wide at the narrow end. And it's even tapered on

each side and it would be nice to round the corners on it. At the narrow end you bore about a quarter of an inch hole in there. Then you get you another stick, something like a whip stock on a horse whip. That's a stick about 5/8 of an inch in diameter. A good green persimmon bush would be fine for this. You would want the stick about 18-20 inches long and on the small end of it cut a ring about ¼ inch from the end where your string won't slip off. Take a good long string, and a piece of braided fishing line would be good. And make it about 2 or 2½ feet long. You tie one end of it in the hole of the board and tie the other around this ring in the stick. Then you take that board by the wide end and take that thing and whirl that thing as fast as you can around your head. And that board whirls and flutters and when you get to going real good and fast it sounds like an airplane. They were a lot of fun too. Of course you had to be careful with a thing like that if there were several children around. Somebody could get hurt with it. Always be careful with things like that.

Then there was another thing that we made. This was a lot of fun too. It was a tin can telephone. Sometimes we would just use a piece of twine string. We might have that twine string about 100 feet long. We would take about a number two or number three can after it had been opened and discarded. We'd punch a little hole in the bottom of the can, right in the center of it. We would take a little stick about like a match and tie the string around it. We'd run the string through the hole and put a can on each end of the string. You would get someone at each end and pull the string tight, and you could talk in that can. And believe it or not, the other fellow could put his can up to his ear and hear every word you said.

But something that is much better than a string is a fine copper wire. You could get it out of a coil. You could unwind yards and yards of the copper wire out of a coil. That was real good when we could get copper wire. We could talk over that tin can telephone for a long ways.

Then there was another thing that we made, and that was the homemade baseball. We made this with yarn or by unravel-

ing an old sock. You know in those days we wore those socks or stocking as we called them. They were a real heavy yarn. The way I always did it was, I cut it off just above the heel, square across, and start raveling. That thread pulled out and after that you get it to where it would roll all the way around. All you had to do was pull it and it would unravel itself.

We would get one of these hard rubber balls, that kids play jacks with, we would use that as the core of the baseball. Then you start winding the yarn around there real tight and you keep turning it and keep it round as possible. You make it about the size as a standard size baseball. Then when you are through get a large needle and real heavy sewing thread and sew that ball all over real good. Boy you got a real good baseball when you make one like that.

Then there was another thing that we made, that was a whistle made from a green hickory limb. This has to be done in the spring time when the sap is rising because otherwise the bark won't drip. You have to cut the stick in two and ring the bark and peel it off and then put it back on there. Then you cut a little flat place on one end of it then level it. Then you'll have an air pocket in the center of this stick. You have a notch back there near the leveled end of it. You blow in that leveled end, through that little slot where you have that flat place on the wood that thing will whistle like a police whistle. We used to make a lot of these in the spring time. You should get some old timer to show you how to do this.

Then there was another thing that we used to make. And this is a Jumping board. This was made by using a two by twelve about eight feet long. It needs to be a good solid wood. You get a piece of log then about ten or twelve inches thick and two or three feet long to put your board across. You lay the plank across the chunk and set it up on it. Then one person stands on each end of the plank. The one who's end of the plank is up in the air jumps up and comes down stiff legged. And this bounces the other guy up in the air. When he comes down he hits the board and bounces the other fellow up. No doubt you have seen this on T. V. or in the circus.

This is real fun. We used to spend hours jumping on the jumping board.

The next thing I want to talk about is the homemade sling shot. This was a boy's delight. I'm not talking about the same thing as a sling shot in one of them to put over you finger so you can hold it. You tie the strings to the pouch you bored the holes in.

Then you get some round rocks, as round as you can find, about an inch in diameter. You put that rock in the pouch so that the pouch is level. And you grip that loose end of the string with your thumb and finger, and put the other over your middle finger. You sling that thing over your head about three or four times and let go when your pouch is going toward your target. After a little practice you could be pretty good with that.

You know in the Bible there was one king who had an army of men that were so good with a sling shot that they could throw within a hairs breath of their target. That was pretty good shooting with a sling shot. This is also a very dangerous thing because you could break a window or a windshield or anything else that you might hit with that rock.

I want to add this little joke right here: It's told about a teenage boy in Arkansas that hunted with a sling shot. He hunted squirrels with them. One day he was coming down a little country road and had three squirrels in his hand. He had two big old fox squirrels and one gray squirrel in his hand. He met a fellow and the guy said, "Sonny, I see you have a mess of squirrels there." He said, "How did you kill the squirrels?" The boy took his sling shot out of his pocket and said, "I killed them with my sling shot." And the guy said, "You did, you must be a good shot with that thing. And the boy said, "Yes s i r, I am." He said, "you see this little gray rascal here, I had to throw at him three times."

Then there was another thing we used to play with and we didn't make this, we just used what was at hand. This

was the forerunner of the frisbee. In those days folks used hog lard for shortening to cook with. This came in buckets of different sizes. The eight pound bucket had a lid on it which was about seven inches in diameter. It was turned down on the edges. You could take one of those bucket lids and sail it for a long way. I found out that you could throw it against a pretty good wind. And it would go way up there and come back nearly to the same place you were standing. We would play with them just like a frisbee.

Then another thing we did was to make a pine bark boat. We would take a piece of bark off a pine about as big as your hand. You would take your pocket knife and whittle a point on the front and a square tail for the back. We would punch a little hole in the middle of the boat but not all the way through. Then get you a leaf and stick it in the hole and it acted like your sail. Boy if a breeze would catch it when it was in the water it would go across the water. This was a lot of fun too.

Another project was stilts. We called them "Tom Walkers" in those days. I don't know how they got that name. We would take a one by one about six feet long. Then we would make two blocks about two feet long. We would nail the strip to that block with some good nails. Then we would get a piece of leather and put a loop over that block and nail it to the out side of the block and then to the shank. That's what we would put our feet in. It took a lot of skill to stay up on those long stilts. Sometimes you took a pretty good fall.

Another thing we did to pass the time in those days was climbing saplings. This is a young tree. I would try to find one about six inches in diameter down at the bottom. You would climb those things as high as you could and then start swaying back and forth. That was a real thriller.

Another game we played in those days was marbles. We played what we called "rolly holly" marbles and another one called "four corner marbles." We would have a square ring about a foot square with a marble in each corner and a big marble in the center. Then we got back there with the marble

we shot with. And we'd shoot at them and try to knock them out of the ring. That was a good past time too.

Then there is one other that I want to tell you about. That is the "button buzzer" or the "button saw mill" some people call them. You need a large button for this, like a large coat button. Then take a piece of good strong twine about four feet long. Then you run the twine through two of the holes where it would be balanced and tie the end of the string together. Then get the button in the middle with two fingers on each end and start pulling and letting go. That thing will start whirling.

That's about all I have on games and past times. I would like to see boys as well as girls today make things as we used to do. Most everything I've talked about is something you can do at home. Go to work, make you some of these toys and play some of these games. That's all I have to offer on these things.

Gathering Wild Fruit and Vegetables, and Game Out of the Woods

Our part of the country here in East Texas was especially blessed by the Creator. We have a wide variety and usually an abundance of natural food and stuff that grows wild. My Dad and Mother grew up in an age when people were dependent to a great degree on these natural foods, and they were adept at locating and gathering them. Of course I grew up under their guidance and training in this also. I shall name as many of those natural foods as I can remember. First let us consider the vegetables. In early spring, poke salad was plentiful. The way Mother fixed it, it was really good. She par-boiled it for about 15 minutes, then dipped it out and rinsed it in clean water, then boiled it until it was tender. She then dipped it out of this water and put it in the frying pan with some bacon dripping and cooked it for a few minutes. Then she scrambled about four eggs in it. Believe me this is a finger-licking good dish of green and good for you. We also gathered a wild lettuce and cooked with it sometimes.

Then we would also gather some wild onions that grew along the creek banks in early spring. They were strong but still tasted like onions.

We also gathered many different kinds of wild fruits. There was a greater variety of these than there were of the wild vegetables. Let us consider them in their seasonal order.

One of the first things to ripen about the middle of May are the dewberries . They are real good to eat fresh with cream and sugar. They also make excellent jelly and jam and cobblers.

About this same time the may-haws get ripe. They look like a little miniature apple. They are about ½ inch in diameter. They grow in the river and bayou bottoms. We used to gather them by the tubs full and sell them. They make good jelly. It tastes like apple jelly, only sharper. Many times it was the rainy season and the back water from the river would be out in the may-haw flats and we would wade out to gather them. We would shake the tree real good and take a minnow seine, and seine them up since they floated on the water. Of course the mosquitoes were real bad at that time of the year too.

We also have an abundance of wild plums, both red and yellow varieties. They are good to eat fresh and for making jellies and plum cobblers. The plums usually get ripe in June.

The next thing to ripen was wild grapes and black berries. There are several varieties of wild grapes. Post oak grapes are plentiful and make good jelly. Then there is the fox grapes and possum grapes which are less desirable. There are also muscadines, and they have a wonderful flavor and make real good jelly.

We also have the elderberries . They make a very good jelly with a distinctive flavor. It is also claimed that they make good wine. This I haven't tried.

Wild persimmons are another of our wild fruit. There are two varieties, the early which ripens about August, and the later one which ripens about late October and November. The early variety is larger and sweeter. These are good fresh and they also can be used to make persimmon cookies. We liked them very much. To make the cookies you run the real

ripe persimmons through a collander and use the pulp to put in the cookies.

Huckleberries also grow in abundance in our area. They get ripe in late summer or early fall. Some people like pies made of them.

Blackberries were ready by late fall, and were used for jellies and jams.

Then there is the blackhaws. They get ripe in late fall and are not very good until after the frost. It seems that possums like them better than humans do. The Blackhaw trees were a good place to look when possum hunting.

We also have several varieties of edible wild nuts. The most common are the hickory nuts and black walnuts. These are plentiful and are good for both humans and squirrels. We always laid in a good supply of both. Some of the fondest memories of my boy-hood days were those cold winter days and nights when we would sit around the open fireplace and crack hickory nuts and walnuts and pick them out of the shells. We ate many of them on the spot. We also picked out several pints of them to garnish cakes with. A good old-fashion hickory nut or black walnut cake is really delicious. We also made candy with them. We would take an old sadiron and turn it upside down between our knees and use it for an anvil to crack the nut on.

There is another type of nut that grows in our area and that is the chinguapin. The tree is a small bushy top tree from 20 to 40 feet tall and the nuts are encased in a thorny burr or hull. When ripe, the outer hull cracks open and makes it easier to get the nut out. They resemble a chestnut some, but are smaller. The kernel has a sweetish flavor. They get ripe in late summer. The squirrels really like them too.

There is still another nut or seed kernel that is good to eat, and that is the bull nettle seed. Now it takes a little patience and skill to collect these without getting stung by the nettles. They are real tasty and rich. They taste something like the Brazil nut.

Years ago even when I was a boy (which was more than 50 years back), people depended alot on wild game which was found in abundance in East Texas.

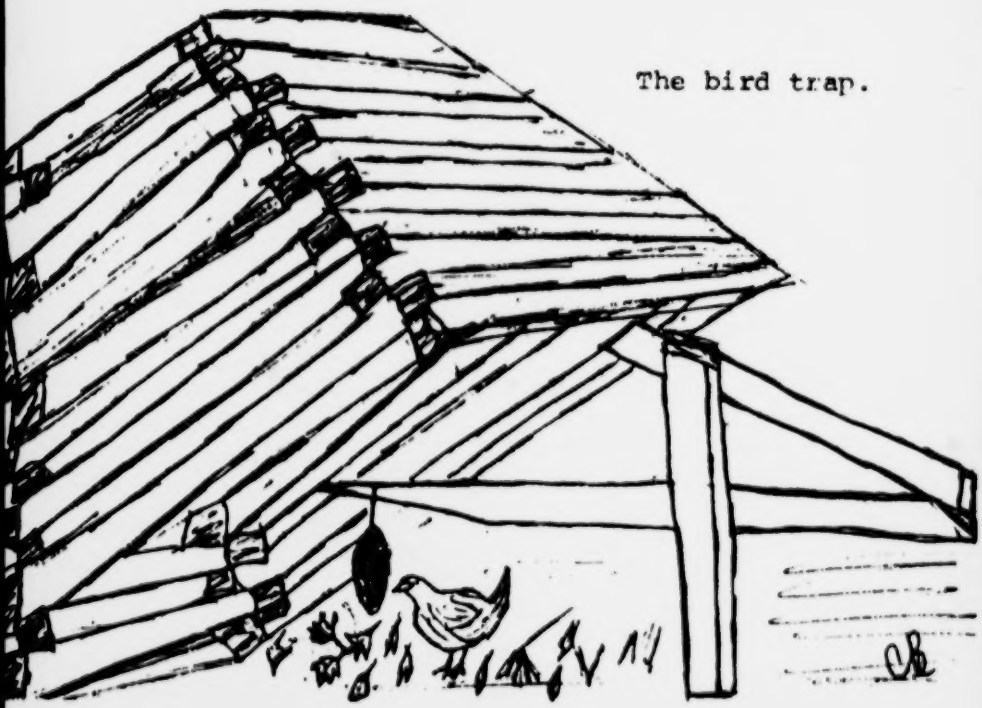
Squirrels were plentiful and years ago there were no

closed season on any game. You just went out and killed a mess of squirrels when you wanted or needed them for food. The young tender ones were real good fried. The older tougher ones we boiled until tender and made dumplings with them. Boy were they good! My Dad nearly always had one or more good hunting dogs that he trained to hunt and tree squirrels, rabbits, possums, and coons.

Another good source of meat is the rabbit. We have two kinds, the cotton-tail which is the smaller breed and the swamp rabbit which is much larger. These can be prepared in many different ways, just plain fried or smothered. Many times we made chili out of the swamp rabbits in the winter time. We also mixed a little fresh fat pork with it and ground it for sausage. I think rabbit chili is the best ever.

We also hunted quail some. They are fine eating but you don't accumulate too much meat in a days hunt after these eary kinds. In the winter time we hunted ducks some, but here again you had to do lots of hunting for very little meat.

Another animal that many people ate is the opossum (or possum). In the late fall they got real fat on persimmons, blackhaws and other foods. The possum is an animal that will eat nearly anything. He is a carnivore, that is he will eat meat either fresh or rotten. I remember several times when I was a boy that Dad would cook a possum. He boiled it until it was tender, then took it out of the water and placed it in a big pan, like a roaster. He put alot of candied yams around it and then baked it until it was golden brown. It was pretty good, but too fat and greasy for me to really enjoy it. The part I liked best was hunting those critters at night. For a light we took long strips of rich or fat pine about three feet long and the size of an ax handle. We split and splintered one end so it would burn. We carried these torches to see how to get through the woods. This was before we owned a good flashlight or gas lantern. You had to be careful to avoid letting the hot tar drip on your hand, it really did stick and burn. We would always carry something to eat on while hunting, usually a pocket full of roasted peanuts. Sometimes the dogs would tree the possum in a tall tree and if the tree was small we would cut it down. You see, we always carried a good sharp ax. Some people ate coons but our family didn't care for them. We hunted them for fun and for their skins which we sold.



The bird trap.

Another source of meat in the winter time was blackbirds. They are migratory birds for the most part and they would come in by the thousands. They soon learned there was food to be found around the lot where we fed the animals. Sometimes we would kill a big mess of them with a shotgun. But a cheaper and more challenging method was to build a bird trap to catch them in. The type of trap I built and used was made of small strips of wood about one inch square. These were easily obtained at any saw mill since all the slabs and strips, sawdust and shavings, was waste then. The trap was about three to four feet square and the strips stacked on top of each other like a log house. The walls would be straight up for about eight inches and then taper in smaller at each layer, pyramid style. On top and center there was an opening about a foot square with a thin piece

of plank hinged with leather hinges, so one could reach in and catch the birds. The trap was set on a trigger on one side about one foot off the ground, with the tongue of the trigger extending back to the center of the trap. We baited the trap with some shelled corn or maize and put a small nubbin on the back end of the trigger. When the birds began to peck this ear of corn it tripped the trigger and let the trap fall to the ground. It wasn't uncommon to catch a dozen or more at one time. The blackbird makes a very tasty dish. We fried them, made bird stew with dumplings, or fixed them with dressing. They were much better when caught in the trap because you didn't have the birdshot to bother with when eating them.

I haven't mentioned deer meat because there were not nearly so many deer when I was a boy as there are now. The open season on them was very short or none at all.

Another good source of meat was to be found in the creeks and rivers and some few natural lakes. There were very few man-made lakes then. Caddo Lake, north of Marshall, Texas was the only such lake in our part of the country, but we seldom fished there. It was too far away for us. There were several large creeks and bayous near, and of course our best fishing place was the Sabine River. Back before the East Texas oil field came in and polluted it, it was a wonderful fishing stream.

My Dad fished a lot and was good at it. We used trot lines a lot in those days. Usually we caught a lot of fish. We also used hoop nets some in the winter and spring. We made our own nets. A neighbor of ours taught me how to knit fish nets when I was about 17 years of age. Sometimes we would catch a lot of big ones in the nets and we sold most of them to help bring in a little extra money. Twenty-five cents per pound for live fish was a good price in those days. Another thing we caught a lot of was turtles, both hard shell and soft shell. We ate turtle meat too. It is real good when fixed right. Even the soft part of the shell on the soft shelled turtle is good. It looks and tastes a lot like beef brisket. My Dad believed that all work and no play made for a dull life so he fished and hunted a lot. Of course as a fun loving boy I made no effort to change his philosophy of life.

The Preparation and Storage of Fruits and Vegetables

In those days when I was growing up, most all country people tried to raise and preserve all the food they could. The methods were much different than what we use now. Of course one of the most common methods of preserving both fruits and vegetables was the canning method, either in glass jars or tin cans. I remember very well when we got our first can sealer and big pressure cooker. I thought we were rich people then. I enjoyed turning the crank on the automatic sealer. It was a marvel to me the way that thing would roll and crimp the lid and can together. But we used other methods of preserving food. We dried a lot of fruit such as peaches, apples, and figs. This was done by cutting the fruit in thin slices and spreading it out on an old sheet on a flat shed roof in the sun. It took several days to dry a batch and we would bring it in every night and put it out again the next day if the sun was shining. Those fried pies made from the dried fruit were really delicious, still are by the way.

We also put up a lot of dry peas and pinto beans to eat during the winter months. You see, there were no home freezers in those days like we have now. There were not even electric refrigerators way back then. For a long time we didn't even have an ice box to keep food cool in. We used to put a lard bucket full of milk with a lid on it on a rope and let it down in the well to keep it cool. We tied the rope so the bucket hung a little above the water. Then one place we lived for several years we used water out of a spring. We had a box fixed so the water from the spring flowed through it and we would keep the milk and butter setting in the box with the cold water flowing around it.

Another item of interest in connection with keeping milk cool and fresh before the days of refrigerators and ice boxes was a screen covered cabinet. It was usually about 2 feet square and about 5¼ feet tall with about three shelves in it. It was an open frame work with 2" x 2" part at each corner and cleats for the shelves to rest on. A full length door was hinged on one side. And the whole thing was covered with

screen wire. Copper wire was used if possible so it wouldn't rust out. Then a flat pan made of galvanized sheet iron was made to set on top. The pan was about three inches deep and the size of the top of the cabinet. Then we would get a piece of thin cloth like wall-paper canvas, large enough to drape around the whole cabinet and long enough to lie in the pan of water on top and reach below the bottom shelf. We would lay a small flat rock on the cloth in the pan to hold it in place. The water would siphon over the edge of the pan and seep down the cloth keeping it damp. The cooler was usually placed in an open hallway or on the porch in a shady spot. The air passing through this damp cloth kept the milk and butter and other food-stuff nice and cool. It also kept the flies away from it. This cooler worked on the same principle as our modern-day water-cooler window jams.

Oh yes, I failed to mention the special bucket one could use to let the milk and butter down in the well with. It was a long slender tin bucket about 5" in diameter and about 12" long. It had a ridge molded around it, down about 4" from the top and a cup made to fit loosely in the top, It had a tight fitting lid over the top of the bucket. Butter was placed in the cup in top and a gallon of milk in the bottom. These buckets are real collector's items now if you could find one.

Another of our natural foods is wild honey. My Father was good at finding bee-trees. In the wild, bees like to build in hollow trees or maybe in a big hollow limb if the tree is large. Now cutting a bee tree and getting the honey was a tricky and dangerous job. Some of those wild bees are vicious. But we used to manage to cut one or two bee trees every summer to get the honey. Sometimes Dad would be able to get the bees in a box called a "gum" and save them. Now one must be careful and not eat too much fresh honey when he is hot and empty. One time my older brother and I cut a bee tree down in the river bottom. It was a very large oak and the weather hot and dry. We didn't take anything to eat so when we got the tree cut down we ate a lot of fresh honey and boy did we get sick. There wasn't anything wrong with the honey, we just ate too much on an empty stomach. But one lesson like that usually lasts for a lifetime.

Tanning Squirrel Hides for Shoe-String Leather

Another very interesting thing I remember from those days was how we used to tan squirrel hides for leather shoe and boot strings. We used the hide from an old tough squirrel so the leather would be stronger. For this purpose you skin the squirrel like you would a coon or even a deer or cow so the hide is in one open flat rectangular piece. While the hide was still fresh, we took some good clean hardwood ashes and spread a thick layer of ashes on the hair side of the skin. We rolled the skin up and tied it with a string. Then we placed it in a bucket and covered it with water and lay a rock or piece of brick on it. This was to hold it under the water and put it in a safe place so no dog or varmint could get to it. Let it soak in this strong ash solution for about four or five days and then take it out, unroll it. You wash off the ashes and lay it on a flat board with hair side up and scrape off the hair. Usually it will come off real easy. You turn it over and scrape the flesh side clean of any meat or fat and wash it clean. Then hang it on the clothes line to dry, when dry it will be stiff. But now the finishing work begins. Take some neatsfoot oil and oil the skin all over. Then begin to work it by bending or rubbing it until the oil is worked in and the skin is soft and pliable.

Now one of the neatest tricks is the way we cut the leather into shoe or bootlaces. We trimmed the skin around the edges until it was a smooth rectangular shape with the carness well rounded to about a 3" radius. The next thing was to sharpen a pocket knife razor sharp. We used a little guage stick to guage the width of the string we wanted. This stick was about ¼" square and 6" long, with a notch at one end. The notch was a little deeper than the thickest place of the skin, and as wide from the end of the stick as you wanted the leather string. To start the string we would start at one corner of the skin and cut at a long angle from nothing to the width of the string desired. Usually we would free-hand cut it until we had about four or five inches of string. Then stick the knife in a board or shelf, something that is steady. With the edge of the knife from you, lay the piece of leather flat on the board-grain side up.

Then straddle the started string around the knife blade. Place the gauge block with notch over the string and the end of back against the flat side of the knife blade. Hold the gauge block firmly in this position and pull on the end of the string and watch the magic of unwinding yards of the finest lace leather you ever saw. You see the whole skin spins around and around as you pull it against the sharp knife and slice of the string. This is an art that could easily be put to use by most anyone and supply some of the longest wearing shoe and bootlaces you ever had.

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Outhouses

In earlier years people didn't have such luxuries as indoor bathrooms with running water, a sink, tub, and a toilet. They had to use what was called a "privy." A privy, or outhouse, was an outside toilet. None of the people we talked to missed the privy. All had vivid memories of the thing, none of them really fond ones.

Jim Box

The typical country out house from 1920-1930's was a building approximately four by six by seven foot tall with a sheet roof. Weather stripped with one by fours. The door was hinged with a button (small pieces of wood) nailed on to it so it could be closed from the inside or outside.

Usually outhouses were classified as "one holers or two holers." The two holers social implications were where two brothers or two sisters could share the Sears and Roebuck or Montogomery Ward cataloges in a relaxed social enviroment. For preadolescence and adolescent boys, the lingerie and foundation garment sections of the two catalogs

often provided a major anatomical and sexual or sex education. Needless to say, these young men used those pages last for their original intended purpose, which need not be named. Also in the country outhouse a baking powder can. The lime was sprinkled into the pit to reduce the pungent odor from time to time.

The country schools had two large out houses on opposite sides of the campus, obviously one for girls and one for boys. My particular school had eight holers, which were filled with capacity during the season when turnip greens and polk salad were a staple diet at home.

The graffiti on the walls was written with stolen bits of chalk from the teachers black boards. The chalk grafitti showed up quite well on the aged darkened boards or the out house's interior.

One serious flaw was inherent in the simple flimsy structure of these small out building. That flaw was that the family out house was an easy victim for the prowling predators of halloween evening. The morning following halloween found many ill, tempered country folk, laboring to restore the family outhouse into its previous up right Victims seized upon this opportunity to dig a fresh pit nearby and move the down fallen out house on to a cleaner smelling and perhaps more sanitary location. The dirt from the new pit was used to cover the family composted cumulation for the previous one to four years.

The large eight holers on the public school grounds seldom escaped the attention of halloween's marauding goblins either. The morning after halloween found an irritated but quietly amused principal and superintendant, supervising a crew of boys pulling with ropes and pushing on the downed building to restore them to an up right position. It mattered not that many of these laborers had been in the goblin gang of the night before. The labor proceeded with an air of jocularity almost as high pitched as that of the previous evening.

Alas the wheels of progress in the 1930's re-

reduced the number of vulnerable targets of halloween. This was accomplished by a program of the WPA which provided recast concrete floor "thrones" which were to heavy to tip over. With the passage from the scene of these vertical shrines of meditation and education an era had ended.

Barbara Anderson

The outhouse was located about 50 yards from the back of the house. There was a well worn path leading to it. It was a small wooden building about 5x5 and about 8 tall. The top was sloped from the front to the back and made from tin. There was a bench type seat with one or two holes and a hinged board to serve as a cover. The bench type seat was enclosed on the front side. There was a hook on the inside to close it from the inside. There was a hand whittled wooden latch to close it from the outside when not in use.

There was a pit dug and it was set over it became necessary to move the outhouse. The old pit was filled in with dirt when you had to move to a new location.

Inside the outhouse there was usually an assortment of catalogs and magazines or whatever could be found. Their main purpose was not for that too. There was also a bag of lime with a small container of some sort in it. This was used to help keep oder down. It was dumped into the pit once or twice a week. There was no way to keep the odor completely down and it was hot in the summer and cold in the winter. There wasn't much chance of anyone staying any longer than was necessary.

One thing I forgot to mention. Ours had a dirt floor in it, but some of the others I've seen had wooden floors. Also wasps found underneath the two seater a good place to build nests, and if that wasn't enough to worry about, you could worry about all the spiders crawling about.

That was one convenience or inconvenience. I was

never sorry to see outhouses replaced by indoor plumbing.

Gladney Burns

"When my brother A.D. was a young man he would go to the outhouse to read. One day my younger brother Hilman set out to break A.D. of this habit. So he went on to the roof of the outhouse to see if there was something he could do to break A.D. of this habit. While he was on the roof he discovered a hole in the roof and he decided that if A.D. was sitting on the seat in the outhouse he could pour

A simple privy with wood floor.

water through the hole in the roof it would run straight down the middle of his back. He then decided that the very next time A.D. went to the outhouse, he would pour water in the hole in hopes that it would break A.D. of the habit of going to the outhouse to read for hours at a time. So it wasn't too much longer until A.D. came out heading for the outhouse with a book in his hand. Hilman let him get settled in good. Then he started out for the outhouse himself, but before he could get there it began to rain and he ran back to the house. Not too much after he got there, A.D. made it back to the house. His pants were soaked and it looked like he had used the restroom all over his pants. The whole family began to crack up and he became terribly embarassed, but it taught him not to go to the outhouse just to read.

Joyce Johnson

Outhouses are out door toilets. A long time ago when people who lived in the country had no indoor plumbing they built outhouses. The construction was built of planed (meaning the same as dressed) or rough lumber, but what ever the case, the seat was always planed .

Outhouses were always built with adults in mind. Usually the over all size was 4 feet by 3 feet and about 7 feet tall, having one door. The fancier ones had small cut outs for windows. These had no glass windows, but were left open for light and ventilation. The cut-outs were high on each side. Tin was usually used for the top. Sometimes handmade wooden shingles were split for the top.

The seat was built of a 1" by 12" inch board having one to three holes usually 9" to 10" inches round being about a foot apart. The seat was about 22 inches from the floor. Youngsters were afraid to use them because of height.

These small buildings were sometimes called "The John", and was a necessity in rural areas. Homes, churches, and schools had them. Toilets

were built to accomodate the need. There were one holers, two-holers, three-holers and so on.

The cleaning of the toilets was done by the parents. Shovels were used to remove the waste. Sometimes there was a hinged door on the back to be lifted and proped open while cleaning. Others were built with a permanent opening at the back on the bottom for easy cleaning. After the waste was removed and hauled away and buried, household lime was sprinkled through the holes to disinfect and deodorize. An ole worn out broom was left in one corner for sweeping out spiders and cobwebs.

The Sears and Roebuck catalogue had a dual putpose back then. The out-of-season catalogue was a necessity. If pages were torn out and clinched in the fist, they were much softer for wiping.

Disasters occured now and then. Usually outhouses were built about 100 yards from the house. This meant you started in time. In summer; wasps, snakes, and spiders were intruders. In winter; rain, snow, and sleet sometimes covered the path getting there. Needless to speak of the cold wind after arrival, making your visit very uncomfortable and disagreeable.

I can only assume about the origin of the outhouse. Probably when the first pioneers settled, and had cleared out most surrounding areas of woodland, they realized the need of a place to hide.

The last people to use out-houses were less fortunate people in rural areas.

Sybil Whiddon

I've seen a lot of outdoor bathrooms in my life time. And the cozy plush bathroom of today makes me appreciate the modern time more.

It made no difference if the sun was blazing hot, or ice, snow, or the north wind was howling around the corner. When nature called you had to brave all kinds of weather to make the trip to the outdoor privy. It may not have a top on it even. A lot had only an unraveled burlap bag for a cover for the door. You

would have to replace them as the wind whipped them into thread bare tatters in no time. There were many more burlap bags which horse feed and cow feed came in in those days. Now feed, etc., comes in thick paper bags, even fertilizer.

I've lived in many different houses and each had a different outdoor toilet. Some were pretty decent, and some were a disgrace. I lived at one place where part of the cover on the toilet was a piece of tin. The other side was open. And when the sleeting rain or snow came I always made sure I got on the side where the tin was covered. It makes me shiver to think of the days gone by before we had indoor bathrooms. I don't think we had an indoor one until about in the 1950's.

Before I married, my dad and brother built an outhouse of scrap lumber. It was a good sturdy building, and roomy. We were so proud. We finally had a good outhouse about as fashionable as any in the country. The Sears-Roebuck catalogue stayed dry on the inside and so did we. It was a ways from the house so you got your exercise when you walked there and back in your line of duty.

Joyce Morton

Outdoor toilets were built of rough lumber. They were usually built about five feet by seven ft. You had to dig a large hole that was dug real deep and then built the toilet over this. The inside was built like a long bench with two holes in it. It had to be built a long way from your house for sanitary reasons. In the winter time you would think you were going to freeze when you had to go to the toilet. They were usually inhabited with spiders and wasps. It had a half moon cut in the front of it.

I remember one halloween some friends of ours would go around and turn the toilets over. She didn't do it anymore after she fell in the toilet hole. She had to tell her parents about it, and her mother had to put bleach in her bathwater to get rid of the smell. And she had to throw her clothes away.

The floor of the toilet was usually dirt and the building was not nailed down so they were fairly easy for two people to tip over. The teenagers would go to the toilet to smoke , hoping their parents wouldn't find out. The door didn't lock. They just had a screen latch inside and a wood button latch on the outside. Lots of them were painted brown. That's where they got the title for the song, "Ode To The Little Brown Shack So Dear To Me."

Kenneth Whiteside

Once when my daddy was about twelve and his younger brother was about ten, Daddy locked Steve up in the outhouse. They were outside waiting for the bus and they had a two holer. Well, Steve had to go to the bathroom. Daddy thought it would be really funny to shut him up in there where he couldn't get out. So he propped the door shut with a two by four and then he got on the bus and went to school. Steve stayed in that outhouse until about 11:00 when his mother finally heard him hollering and came and let him out.

Once some boys were out on Halloween night and they were turning over outhouses. This old farmer snuck up behind them and shot thim in the behind with buckshot. They never did go back to his house.

Terry Barr

The outhouses were cold in the winter time and hot in the summer time. The outhouses were very difficult during cold and raining days. When you went the bathroom you had to go 100 yards behind the house, in the rain, snow, sleet, and hot weather. There weren't any inside bathrooms at all. The common outhouse had anywhere from around two to four seats. We were all time having to wait for your brother, sister, daddy, or mama got through. We didn't have boy and girl restrooms, like we do today.

When we built the outhouses we had to find a place that was not too far from the house. We had

to dig a hole before you built it. Then after digging the hole you could build the outhouse. During boyhood or girlhood, we used Sears and Roebuck catalogs and newspapers for tissue paper. Hardly anyone had any bathroom tissue. We didn't have any at all. The outhouses had to be cleaned out regularly and that wasn't too interesting at all. It also wasn't easy to do. Flies, mosquitoes, and bugs were a common thing around. The way people could go to the bathroom was really only to the outhouses or they could go out in the woods which was done if some people didn't have outhouses.

Mildred Abshier

Most farm homes in our part of the world had outhouses--some accommodated two users, some three, some only one. Then there were homes that had none and, in the early days of my life, our home fell into this last category.

How did we manage? A profusion of bushes and shrubs grew in close proximity to our house and provided cover for privacy; there were also barns and stables and cowsheds that one might get into or behind. And not to be forgotten were the "thunder mugs" --ours was always of the common variety, enamelware, nothing fancy. And poor Mama! Why she didn't make all the family take turns at cleaning those chamber pots, I never knew. But she always took that duty upon herself.

But there came a day when Little Sister would have her way, and we would have an outhouse. The baby of the family, born prematurely and held very dear for fear of losing her, she more or less ruled the roost, so to speak. Papa had been brought up so poor that he could never see any sense in wasting money on lumber for a privy, especially when there were adequate means of cover at hand. But Little Sister prevailed, literally bulldozing him into submission.

It happened this way: A school chum was coming to spend the week-end with her and she simply would not have the family degraded before her friend by

not having an acceptable privy. And she told Papa so in no uncertain terms. Anyhow he got busy with the structure.

The finished product was a double capacity affair equipped with latches, inside and out. Lacking carpenter skills, Papa had problems fashioning the openings over which occupants would position themselves. They were not exactly shaped and proportioned to that part of the anatomy which they were to accommodate; too, they presented some rough, splintery areas--but those would wear smooth with time and use, he said.

Little Sister's friend came and all was lovely; at appointed times they walked arm in arm to the new structure, Little Sister nonchalant, as if having an outhouse was nothing new in her family.

Often we had a house full of company, and at such times traffic to the new little building became congested and occupants had to be extra careful to keep the inside latch turned--for privacy. On one such occasion I saw my uncle go inside and pull the door to, but he seemingly failed to turn the inside latch, as the door stood slightly ajar. A few minutes later a scream emanated from the vicinity of the little house. At that moment a young lady, some seventeen or eighteen years of age, slammed shut the door of the privy, flung her arms into the air in tragic gesture as if forcing some unwanted vision from sight, and rushed headlong in the opposite direction. In truth, Uncle had not secured the inside latch.

The most well known privy in East Texas resides on the grounds of the Rusk County Memorial Library in Henderson. It was placed there by the Rusk County Historical Commission. The historians got the idea for preserving an outhouse when they noticed a gap in the education of school children often asked the guide, "Where's the bathroom?" The guide told them, "They used an

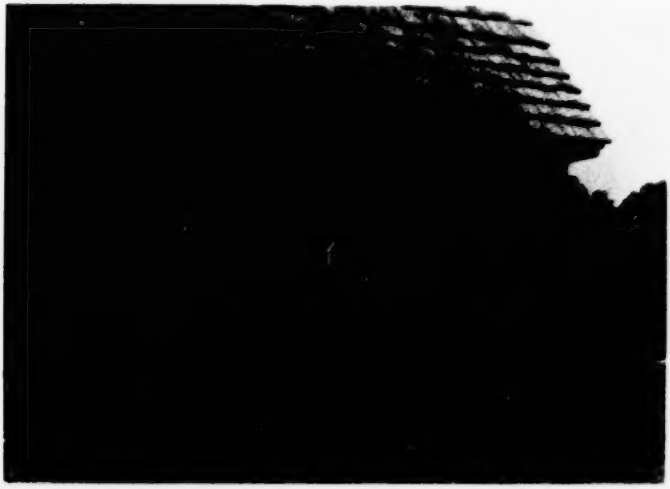
outhouse." And then the kids said, "What's an outhouse?"

The outhouse is commodious, measuring six ft. by eight ft. in floorspace. The steeply pitched tin roof is fourteen ft. high at the peak and included an awning over the three steps leading up to the door. Its red paint is faded and peeling, but the old outhouse is still structurally solid. And a close look reveals the expense and skilled carpentry that went into it.

It features double-wall construction, with louvered windows on two sides. The interior walls are paneled and have fancy wainscoting and trim along the bottom. All door and window facings have intricate milled patterns, as does the ceiling.

The business portion of the outhouse is a simple, unadorned bench along the back wall. The three holes are side by side, each covered with a wooden lid. And each hole is a different size.

The fancy outhouse in Henderson.



Marbles

Marbles and marble games have been around for a long time. Marbles games are known to have been played by the ancient Egyptians. They spread from there to Greece and to Rome. The Roman legions brought marbles to Britain and to northern Europe.

From England the movement of marbles games coincided with the spread of their empire. English marbles games crossed the Atlantic to America. The marbles played in the United States are derivations of English games. George Washington was a marbles player, as were Thomas Jefferson, John Quincy Adams, and Abraham Lincoln.

Some material on marbles came to us from the Great American Marble Factory. They were a lot of help on some of the games and the rules which follow:

Nucks

Nucks is a hole game, involving three holes each a yard from the other. Holes of any dimensions agreed on by the players. A shooting line is established about 10 feet away from the first hole. Players lag (roll the marble)to the line, and the closest one has the choice of being first

or second. The first player shoots or rolls his marble to get it in the hole. He continues as long as his marbles go in the holes. When he misses, the second holes or to hit the opponent's marble. Hitting the opponent's marble gives an extra turn, as does going in the hole. The first player to get in all three holes in the proper order, (1,2, 3)wins and collects one or more marbles from each of the other players.

Ringer

Ringer is the traditional enclosure game, and the one used for championship tournaments. A circle of agreed upon size (atleast three feet, and no more than ten in diameter)is laid out and each player puts an agreed upon number of target marbles (miggles)in the center. Target marbles must be at least 2" from each other, but no more than 3". Each player takes a turn lagging to the edge of the circle from a point ten feet away. The closest to the line has the choice of going first or second, and the others play in order of their closeness.

Players shoot their marbles from outside the ring (as close as can be without hunching over the edge of the ring)to strike the target marbles and knock them out of the ring. Players must shoot "knuckles down" (at least one knuckle touching the ground), unless agreed otherwise at the start of the game. If a player's shooter remains in the ring after his turn, it becomes a legitimate target and must be ransomed if captured by another player. The winner is the person who has captured the most marbles when all target marbles have been knocked out of the ring. Ringer can be played "For fairs", in which case the marbles are returned to their owners after the game, or "For Keeps", in which case the players retain all captured marbles.

Chasies

Players agree on the course to be followed. The

first player shoots or rolls his marble down the course. The second player attempts to shoot or roll so that his marble hits the first marble. If it does so, or, if it comes sufficiently close so that the second player can touch both marbles with any part of one hand (called Span!), then the first player pays a penalty of one marble. If it does not, then the second player must shoot or roll and the first player must chase. Play continues until all reach the end of the course.

Bounce Eye

Draw a circle on the ground about 1 ft. in diameter. Then the players put 2 or more marbles in a pile in the middle of the circle. Each player in turn stands at the rim of the circle and drops their shooter from eye level into the pile of marbles. The object is to hit the most marbles out of the circle. The game is over when there are no marbles left in the circle.

Football

This game is started by drawing a football shape in the dirt, with a line connecting the two ends. Each player puts one of their marbles on the line. In turn each player tries to knock the marbles off the line and out of the football. When all the marbles are knocked out, the game is over and the winner is the player with the most marbles.

Old Bowler

Draw a square in the dirt and connect the corners with diagonal lines. Place marbles as in the diagram. To determine who goes first, bowl from a starting line to see who comes closest to the square. He/She then tries to shoot the four corner marbles first and plays until they miss. Then the center

target, called "Old Bowler" must be knocked out. If one of the players mistakenly hits "Old Bowler" before the other target marbles are eliminated, they are automatically out.

We also talked to others who remembered their marbles playing days. We discovered a variety of games in a time when young people created their own entertainment.

Bobby Morton

You start at the bottom hole and go through the others and get back to the bottom hole. There's one marble to each person and every person puts in five to ten marbles. When you knock the marbles out you win and get to keep the marbles. You all get in a circle and play. Draw a line and get ten to twelve feet away and shoot marbles and see who could get it the closest to the line. There's a cat eye marble, and back then they would trade ten or fifteen marbles for one cat eye marble. Cat eye marbles are marbles that have ribbon like things in the centerof the marbles, you can use marbles and throw them and see who can hit the crack or get closest to the crack. They used to throw the marbles down the sand road and see if you can hit the other persons marbles. If you did, got to keep them. Then you could use the marbles in a sling shot and shoot the marbles. They shot the marbles out of the sling shot along the railroad track and shot the insulators of telephone poles and any thing they could find. Birds, dogs, cats, and all kinds of other things were often targets.

Ruth Pugh

Marbles have probably been around since the beginning of time. I used to play with steel ones, I think they were ball bearings. They called them steelies. They would fight over them. Every one had better put their hands to themselves. Many

boys we were caught around back of the school house shooting marbles when we should be in school. Marbles were not always easy to get. Every boy wasn't able to get them. When you got some you better hold on to them. There were many marbles games and knife games the boys played. Now we have marble games that are boxed up and consist of other parts. Our famous one is Chinese Checkers.

Alton Cromwell

I started playing marbles when I was about seven years of age. There were usually, 15 to a sack that they carried around. The marbles were all different colors. At first, in about 1928, they came out with clay marbles, but latter came

The correct grip for shooting the marble.

out with stone marbles, called "white stones marbles." Sometimes the marbles were set in squares with one big one in the middle. In about 1932 they came out with glass marbles.

Usually if it was a group playing there would be from anywhere to 200 through 300 marbles in a circle about 15 feet in diameter. I would take a big agate and stand up and would bust a marble out of the circle. And sometimes I would break them but they still would go out of the circle. If your hand or your foot went over the line, somebody else would take your turn. The agates that they played with came in all sizes, some up to the size of a 5¢ piece. They were made up of a special rock. If you hit the marble hard enough with the agate it would make a half moon inside. To take the half moon out, you would soak it in hog lard and leave it over night. The next morning it would be gone. I had to do this a lot.

They had another game called "rolly holly", but the marbles were much much smaller. You would make holes, and would try to get the marble in the hole. But your opponent would try to knock your marble out of the hole, and in turn get that marble. All the marbles you knocked out of the circle, you got to keep.

Usually if you had a good number of kids, 10 to 12would play at once, depending on if they had enough marbles used to sell my marbles would win, 100 for 10¢. This would pay my way to the show every week.

We used to play where the First National Bank is, the new one. It used to be a wagon yard when I was a boy. They used to make their own marbles, out of clay. We would usually play for "keeps", if you got it you kept it. The game, if a good one, would last anywhere from a hour and a half to two hours. The main or favorite marble would be the "Agate." We would use the agate to shoot glass marbles with. The agate is a little see through. Only the boys played no girls played. I was real good. A marble could be an inch away from the line and I would hit it, and my agate would stay inside the circle. At

the store, marbles usually cost about 25 marbles for 10¢ but I would sell 100 for 25¢ which was a good deal. We only played at school a little, but we didn't play for "keeps." When I had quit playing marbles I had about 1500 of them. My father had played in 1903 and gave me his agate. Marble playing is really a skill and art.

Jim Box

Well, I suppose if you're going to describe how to play marbles, there are all different sorts of games. But, the marbles themselves in my youth were called glassies, aggies, crockies.

Crockies were made out of baked clay. They were rounded into pretty fair circles, but they weren't always round, and they were likely to go off in tangments because they weren't completely round. They were made and sold for, oh, I don't know, you could get a big sack of them for a nickel. They were probably made in China, and I'd say there are about 200 of them in a sack.

Glassies were, of course, made out of glass and they had a variety of swirled patterns and colors in each one. Some were a solid color but mose of them had some sort of swirl pattern. When you shot the marble, you'd have a nice pattern like a barber pole or something as the marble went toward it's target.

Aggies were the best quality, and of course these were the ones we all used for our shooting marbles. There were also steelies, which were made out of steel. They were ball bearings. They were outlawed, because when they hit a crockie or a glassy with one of those it broke the marble. You had to have a destructive vent to want to use steelies. Usually, steelies were outlawed.

Ok, the aggies, what marked them and made them so pretty, was that when they hit another marble, sometimes it would put a little moon in them. You know, like a little new moon and so you'd see a well used aggie it would have little new moons under the

surface of it all the time. Aggies came in all sorts of colors. I think the rust colored ones were my favorites. They ranged from some white to some almost pure black. But, black ones were pretty scarce. That pretty well covers the marbles.

Playing the game we, as young boys, always decided first whether the game was for keeps. That meant that if you won a marble you stuck it in your pocket and the other guy lost it. The game was over when the other guy lost all his marbles. That's where the expression came from, he lost his marbles. Usually the game was played by drawing a big circle out in the dirt and this usually was good old black dirt, like we have here, or sandy dirt. And you would take a stick or a pocket knife and draw a big circle on the ground about 18 inches to 2 feet in circumference.

There would usually be four or five marble shooters and each person would ante up a couple or three marbles to put into the circle. This is what the crockies were usually used for, because they the cheapest and ultimately what you wanted to lose the most if you had to lose something. Then the first shooter, keeping his knuckles out of the circle, would shoot. The aggies were what they would usually use to shoot with. He would shoot his aggie into the circle into the other marbles trying to knock the best looking marble out of the circle, but at the same time he wanted his marble also to come out of the circle. That's because if his marble stayed inside the circle, then people were privileged to shoot at it, and if they knocked it out of the circle, then they got to keep it.

So they always wanted to make sure that their aggie came out of the circle after hitting the other, marble. So you try to make them spin travel quickly after they hit the other marble and get out of the circle. If you hit one too solidly, and you had to hit them pretty solid to knock the other marble out of the circle, your aggie would stay inside the circle and you would lose an expensive marble. By

Master marble shooter - Jim Box.

expensive I mean you'd pay a nickel for whole sack of crockies, and you could get probably twenty or thirty glassies for a nickel and you might pay as much as 10 cents for one aggie. So if you lost your aggie by having it stay in the circle after you knocked a marble out and you lost it by somebody knocking it out, it was the equivalent of losing anywhere from 30 to 60 glassies and a couple of sacks of crockies.

We went to a little country school, and during marble season it was not at all uncommon to see boys with their pockets bulging. Marble season is when school started. What was confusing about the bulges in their pockets was in the area around Ft. Worth, Birdville, there were native pecan trees, and the pecans were getting ready to thresh. So one pocket would be full of marbles and one would be full of pecans.

Most boys also had a sack they carried around their neck. It was a little canvas sack with a drawstring around the top, and of course you could tell by looking at someone's sack or at the bulges in their pockets and tell whether they had been lucky or unlucky at marbles. Oh, I started to say, you had a pocket full of marbles and a pocket full of pecans and you could tell by looking at the bulges which was which. The pecans were sharper. The pecan season also was marked by brown hands, because we couldn't wait for them to get ready and fall from the outer shell. We'd shake them down and peel the green shell out from around them and eat them.

Oh yes, we would determine who shot first by lagging that is we'd shoot our marbles toward a straight line marked off about six or eight feet away. The one whose marble was closest to the line was the one who got to shoot first. The first shooter was always at an advantage because he got to shoot at the choice marble.